

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-13 and 15-32 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 13 and 22 are amended. Claim 13 is amended to address a claim objection by the Patent Office.

No new matter is added to the application by this Amendment. The new features added to claims 1 and 22 find support in the specification, as originally filed, at, for example, page 10, lines 4-14.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

I. Claim Objection

Claims 4 was objected to for informalities because removal of the term "alkyl" allegedly improperly broadens the scope of the claims to moieties not present or not supported by the specification.

The Patent Office requests that Applicants incorporate the term "substituted" back into the phrase "N-substituted amide" within claim 4.

Claim 4 does not include a feature directed to a substituted amide as alleged by the Patent Office. Applicants assume that the Patent Office was referring to claim 13 which recites "N-substituted amides". In response, Claim 13 was amended to recite the phrase "N-alkyl-substituted amides" as suggested by the Patent Office.

In view of the amendments to claims 13, Applicants submit that the claim objection is moot.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the claim is respectfully requested.

II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1, 2, 5-9, 11-13, 15-17 and 19-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by JP 09-286958 to Azuma et al. (hereinafter "Azuma"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Patent Office alleges that Azuma discloses each and every feature recited in claims 1, 2, 5-9, 11-13, 15-17 and 19-31. Applicants respectfully disagree with the allegations by the Patent Office.

Nowhere does Azuma disclose a flame-retardant pressure-sensitive adhesive (claim 1) or a process for producing a flame-retardant pressure-sensitive adhesive (claim 22) comprising a flame retardant component having a residual solvent content of 0.5% or less as required by amended claims 1 and 22.

Applicants submit that Azuma, at best, discloses a mixture having a solvent range of 1.5 to 60% (see paragraph [0039]). Accordingly, the presently claimed pressure-sensitive adhesive having such a very low solvent amount is not achievable according to the teachings of Azuma.

Because the features of independent claims 1 and 22 are neither taught nor suggested by Azuma, Azuma cannot anticipate, and would not have rendered obvious, the features specifically defined in claims 1 and 22 and their dependent claims.

For at least these reasons, claims 1, 2, 5-9, 11-13, 15-17 and 19-31 are patentably distinct from and/or non-obvious in view of Azuma. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 USC 102(b) are respectfully requested.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 4, 18 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Azuma in view of EP 0 018 643 to Boyce et al. (hereinafter "Boyce") or US 5,851,663 to Parsons et al. (hereinafter "Parsons"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Boyce and/or Parsons do not remedy the deficiencies of Azuma as set forth above with respect to independent claims 1 and 22, from which claims 4, 18 and 32 directly or indirectly depend. Boyce and/or Parsons does not remedy the deficiencies of Azuma because neither Boyce nor Parsons teaches a pressure sensitive adhesive having a residual solvent content of 0.5% or less.

Thus, Azuma, Boyce and Parsons, taken singly or in combination, fail to teach or suggest a pressure-sensitive adhesive that has a residual solvent content of 0.5% or less as required by amended claims 1 and 22.

Because the features of independent claims 1 and 22 are neither taught nor suggested by Azuma, Boyce and Parsons, taken singly or in combination, these references would not have rendered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, the features specifically defined in claims 1 and 22 and their dependent claims.

For at least these reasons, claims 4, 18 and 32 are patentable over Azuma in view of Boyce or Parsons. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-13 and 15-32 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Early and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

CONDITIONAL PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

If entry and consideration of the amendments above requires an extension of time, Applicants respectfully request that this be considered a petition therefor. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee(s) due in this connection to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

ADDITIONAL FEE

Please charge any insufficiency of fees, or credit any excess, to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

Respectfully submitted,
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